



Southwestern Idaho News

ADA, ADAMS, BOISE, CANYON, ELMORE, GEM, OWYHEE, PAYETTE, VALLEY & WASHINGTON COUNTIES

ECONOMIC TRENDS

November's seasonally adjusted unemployment rate for the Boise-Nampa Metropolitan Statistical Area increased slightly to 2.9 percent following three straight months of falling unemployment. Further seasonal declines in the construction industry as winter began to set in, curtailing activities, contributed to the higher rate. Job opportunities in accommodations slowed as the busy summer and fall seasons ended and the wait began for the snow to fly and the holidays to kick in. Despite the slight increase in November's unemployment rate, it was still two-tenths of a percentage point lower than the same month one year earlier.

Total nonfarm jobs managed a slight increase in November of 0.3 percent, about 900 new jobs. The Boise area has recorded over 275,000 jobs for two consecutive months — more than 16,000 above November 2005 for an annual increase of 6.3 percent. While construction employment continued falling as winter set in, retail trade added 1,200 new jobs for the busy holiday shopping season. November's civilian labor force and total em-

	Civilian Labor Force	Number Unemployed	Percent Unemployed	Number Employed
Ada	198,602	5,204	2.6	193,398
Adams	1,940	138	7.1	1,803
Boise	4,352	124	2.9	4,228
Canyon	83,036	2,847	3.4	80,189
Elmore	11,083	484	4.4	10,599
Gem	7,758	330	4.2	7,428
Owyhee	5,500	124	2.3	5,376
Payette	10,359	517	5.0	9,842
Valley	5,200	196	3.8	5,005
Washington	5,103	218	4.3	4,885
Statewide	765,068	25,472	3.3	739,596

Southwestern Idaho Table 1: Boise City-Nampa MSA Labor Force & Employment (Ada, Canyon, Boise, Gem and Owyhee counties)

	Nov 2006*	Oct 2006	Nov 2005	% Change Last Month	% Change Last Year
INDIVIDUALS BY PLACE OF RESIDENCE					
<i>Seasonally Adjusted</i>					
Civilian Labor Force	299,200	294,900	289,300	1.5	3.4
Unemployment	8,600	7,900	9,100	8.9	-5.5
% of Labor Force Unemployed	2.9	2.7	3.1		
Total Employment	290,600	287,000	280,200	1.3	3.7
<i>Unadjusted</i>					
Civilian Labor Force	298,900	293,300	289,000	1.9	3.4
Unemployment	8,300	6,900	8,600	20.3	-3.5
% of Labor Force Unemployed	2.8	2.3	3.0		
Total Employment	290,600	286,400	280,400	1.5	3.6
JOBS BY PLACE OF WORK					
Nonfarm Payroll Jobs**	276,200	275,300	259,900	0.3	6.3
GOODS-PRODUCING INDUSTRIES	55,300	55,500	51,900	-0.4	6.6
<i>Natural Resources & Construction</i>	24,300	24,400	22,100	-0.4	10.0
Construction	23,900	24,000	21,700	-0.4	10.1
<i>Manufacturing</i>	31,000	31,100	29,800	-0.3	4.0
Durable Goods	24,500	24,500	23,600	0.0	3.8
Wood Product Manufacturing	2,600	2,700	2,300	-3.7	13.0
Fabricated Metal Products Mfg.	1,500	1,500	1,500	0.0	0.0
Machinery Manufacturing	1,200	1,200	1,200	0.0	0.0
Computer & Electronic Manufacturing	14,200	14,200	13,800	0.0	2.9
Transportation Equipment Mfg.	2,100	2,200	2,200	-4.5	-4.5
Other Durable Goods	2,900	2,700	2,600	7.4	11.5
Nondurable Goods	6,500	6,600	6,200	-1.5	4.8
Food Manufacturing	4,400	4,500	4,400	-2.2	0.0
Printing & Related Support Activities	700	700	700	0.0	0.0
Other Nondurable Goods	1,400	1,400	1,100	0.0	27.3
SERVICE-PRODUCING INDUSTRIES	220,900	219,800	208,000	0.5	6.2
<i>Trade, Transportation, & Utilities</i>	55,100	54,000	51,100	2.0	7.8
Trade	47,300	46,200	43,900	2.4	7.7
Wholesale Trade	12,500	12,600	11,800	-0.8	5.9
Wholesalers, Durable Goods	7,500	7,500	7,200	0.0	4.2
Wholesalers, Nondurable Goods	3,600	3,600	3,600	0.0	0.0
Retail Trade	34,800	33,600	32,100	3.6	8.4
Food & Beverage Stores	4,500	4,500	4,600	0.0	-2.2
General Merchandise Stores	7,000	6,800	6,800	2.9	2.9
All Other Retail Trade	23,300	22,300	20,700	4.5	12.6
Transportation, Warehousing, & Utilities	7,800	7,800	7,200	0.0	8.3
Utilities	600	600	600	0.0	0.0
Transportation & Warehousing	7,200	7,200	6,600	0.0	9.1
<i>Information</i>	5,400	5,400	5,400	0.0	0.0
Telecommunications	1,400	1,400	2,400	0.0	-41.7
<i>Financial Activities</i>	14,700	14,800	13,700	-0.7	7.3
Finance & Insurance	10,300	10,200	9,600	1.0	7.3
Real Estate & Rental & Leasing	4,400	4,600	4,100	-4.3	7.3
<i>Professional & Business Services</i>	39,100	39,100	37,700	0.0	3.7
Professional, Scientific, & Technical	11,300	11,300	11,000	0.0	2.7
Management of Companies & Ent.	5,800	5,800	5,800	0.0	0.0
Administrative & Support & Waste Mgmt.	22,000	22,000	20,900	0.0	5.3
<i>Educational & Health Services</i>	32,800	32,700	31,800	0.3	3.1
Educational Services	3,300	3,100	3,200	6.5	3.1
Health Care & Social Assistance	29,500	29,600	28,600	-0.3	3.1
Hospitals	9,600	9,600	9,200	0.0	4.3
<i>Leisure & Hospitality</i>	23,300	23,500	21,800	-0.9	6.9
Arts, Entertainment, & Recreation	3,200	3,400	2,500	-5.9	28.0
Accommodation & Food Services	20,100	20,100	19,300	0.0	4.1
Accommodation	2,000	2,100	2,100	-4.8	-4.8
Food Services & Drinking Places	18,100	18,000	17,200	0.6	5.2
<i>Other Services</i>	7,200	7,200	6,300	0.0	14.3
Total Government	43,300	43,100	40,200	0.5	7.7
Federal Government	5,900	5,800	5,800	1.7	1.7
State & Local Government	37,400	37,300	34,400	0.3	8.7
State Government	14,000	14,000	13,600	0.0	2.9
State Government Education	4,900	5,000	5,000	-2.0	-2.0
State Government Administration	9,100	9,000	8,600	1.1	5.8
Local Government	23,400	23,300	20,800	0.4	12.5
Local Government Education	15,000	14,900	12,800	0.7	17.2
Local Government Administration	8,400	8,400	8,000	0.0	5.0

* Preliminary Estimate

**Full- or part-time jobs of people who worked for or received wages in the pay period including the 12th of the month

ployment figures for all 10 counties in southwestern Idaho are shown in Southwestern Idaho Table 2 on page 13.

SPECIAL TOPIC: Treasure Valley Housing Market

The number of homes sold in the metropolitan area in November totaled 970, the third best November in 10 years, according to the Intermountain Multiple Listing Service. Sales were up 40 percent from the 579 homes sold in November 1997.

November home sales in Ada County at 630 also marked the third best November since 1997, 11 percent more than the 10-year average of 567. Canyon County had its second highest November home sales since 1997 at 340, 27 percent higher than its 10-year average of 268. In fact, more homes were sold in Ada County during the most recent November than the number of homes sold in both Ada and Canyon counties from 1997 through 2000.

Although this November's home sales were well below last November, 2005 overall was the best year on record for home sales. The decline in sales numbers from 2005 to 2006 is nothing more than a return to a sustainable rate of growth. Sales in 2006 were still 11 percent higher than the preceding 10-year average.

Median home prices in Ada County posted a double digit percentage increase, 11.6 percent, last November from the same month a year ago to \$231,000. In addition, homes in Ada County in November averaged 86 days on the market compared with 94 days in November 2005.

Median home prices in Canyon County posted an even greater gain year-over-year, rising 18.9 percent to \$164,950 from the same month a year earlier. As in Ada County, homes sold this November spent less time on the market than they did the year before – 93 days compared to 108 days.

This data indicates the region's housing market is still healthy. Even though home sales are not at the volume they were a year ago, sales are still above historical averages. In addition, the housing market is still seeing robust price appreciation, and homes are spending less time on the market. As interest rates remain at historical lows and the population continues to grow, so too will the housing market.

AREA DEVELOPMENTS

Boise Metropolitan Statistical Area

- XL Four Star Beef Inc. is re-opening the shuttered Swift facility in Nampa. Mid-2005, Swift and Co. permanently closed their facilities in Nampa and Nebraska and sold both to the Canadian company. XL Four Star Beef is currently hiring mostly production workers but also some accountants and maintenance workers.

- Commercial construction activity was vigorous in Canyon County during 2006 with over 1 million square feet of new retail space built, over 90 percent in Nampa. The retailers included Wal-Mart, Sam's Club, Costco, Target, Best Buy, Petco, Old Navy and Michael's, among others.
- Alternate Energy Holdings Inc. has proposed building a nuclear power plant near Bruneau in Owyhee County. The proposed facility is a 1,500-megawatt light water reactor.
- The Boise area's cost of living declined again in November, falling 1.8 percent, according to the Wells Fargo Boise Area Cost of Living Index. This follows the September-to-October decline of 0.7 percent. A dramatic drop in fuel prices, 11 percent during November, was a major factor. (See cost-of-living article on page 4.)
- The city of Nampa recently approved a new urban renewal district, smaller than the one that expired in 2004 and with a limited list of things it will provide. The district is expected to help pay for a new police station, a new library, installation of services to a new industrial park and improvements to Nampa-Caldwell and Franklin boulevards.
- Image National Sign is moving its factory to Nampa from Boise on Star Road. Image makes electronic signs for large retailers. When it opens, the company's new facility will employ approximately 100 workers.
- Building permits for single family homes in the city of Caldwell through November 2006 were running 25 percent above year-ago levels. From January through November 2005, Caldwell had issued 899 permits for single family homes. In 2006, that number had risen to 1,121. In addition, 4,392 residential lots were approved for development from January through November 2006, nearly double the 2,200 the year before.
- Now that the new Karcher Road interchange project is complete in Nampa, work has begun on a large project in Caldwell. More than doubling the size of the Franklin Road Interchange just a few miles to the west will cost \$25 million. The narrow two-lane bridge crossing the freeway will be expanded to six lanes, and the on and off ramps will be widened to accommodate the increased traffic that Caldwell has experienced in recent years. The Franklin Road interchange improvements are expected to be finished by fall 2008.
- The city of Meridian will also benefit from a new interstate road project. Utilities are being relocated

around Locust Grove Road to prepare for the construction of a new freeway overpass at a cost of about \$6 million. The actual road work is scheduled to start this spring and be completed in spring 2008.

- Micron Technology recently purchased part of another company with operations in Oregon, Washington, California and Malaysia. For approximately \$53 million, Micron acquired the image sensor division of Avago Technologies and added 90 more employees to the Micron payroll although these employees won't be moving to Idaho.

Elmore County

- The Marathon Cheese plant located in Mountain Home is now up and running but not yet at full capacity. Marathon began receiving shipments of cheese blocks in mid January. Hundreds of applicants sought jobs at the plant. Within three years Marathon Cheese expects to employ around 600 workers.

- Elmore County recently enacted a temporary moratorium on planned unit developments, giving commissioners time to review the county's zoning laws and gear up for anticipated growth in the coming years.

Payette County

- Payette County commissioners are moving forward on the county's proposed ethanol plant. A preliminary feasibility study is under way to examine operating costs, projected income and potential ethanol markets. County commissioners estimate the ethanol plant will employ about 50 people at an average salary of \$16 per hour. Commissioners also expect the facility to bring \$8 into the county for every \$1 in ethanol produced.

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IDAHO FACTS . .

A Healthy and Diversified Economy

- Idaho's personal income increased nearly 16 percent between 2003 and 2005, ranking third nationally. (U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis, 4/2006)
- Idaho exports increased 55 percent in value between 2003 and 2005, ranking seventh nationally in percentage growth. Idaho's top exports include high-tech, food and agriculture and wood and building materials. (U.S. Census Bureau)
- Idaho exports set a record for the first half of 2006 of nearly \$1.8 billion. China, including Hong Kong, and Canada are Idaho's largest markets for international trade. (U.S. Census Bureau)
- Idaho's gross state product grew at over 18 percent when adjusted for inflation between 2003 and 2005 to rank first in the nation. Inflation-adjusted growth ranked first in 2004 and fourth in 2005. (U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis, 6/2006)
- Idaho's growth rate in nonfarm payroll jobs ranked fourth nationally between 2002 and 2005 and from 2004 to 2005. (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics)
- Idaho's nonfarm payroll jobs increased by a greater percentage than any other state between second quarter 2005 and second quarter 2006. The rate was just over 5.1 percent. (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 7/2006)
- Idaho is number one in the nation in the production of potatoes, trout and winter peas. The state ranks in the top 10 in 22 other products. (U.S. Department of Agriculture)
- Idaho ranks first nationally in manufacturing investment. (Corporation for Enterprise Development, 2006 Development Report Card for the States)
- Idaho ranked first nationally in the percentage growth of in new companies. (Corporation for Enterprise Development, 2006)
- Idaho ranked seventh nationally with a 25 percent increase in the value added by manufacturing in the latest Annual Survey of Manufactures. (U.S. Census Bureau)

For more facts about Idaho, visit the Web site at <http://brand.idaho.gov>.